AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the presently pending claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended)   A computer system that includes components stored on a computer storage medium, the components comprising:

a uniform interface that is independent of any user interface, having a set of defined options that are independent of any user interface options, configured to receive a generalized request from a report object and, based upon information included in the generalized request, access data from a general ledger database and return the accessed data to the report object, the report object being configured to operate without directly accessing the general ledger database,

wherein at least one staging table, having a standardized structure which is independent of business rules of the general ledger database, is utilized by the uniform interface to store at least a portion of the accessed data, and

wherein the uniform interface is further configured to access the data from the general ledger database by translating the generalized request into a specific query which, upon execution, populates the at least one staging table with the accessed data, and

wherein the uniform interface is further configured to, in response to the generalized request, query the at least one staging table to retrieve the accessed data and to return the accessed data to the report object after execution of the specific query that populates the at least one staging table, and

wherein columns in the at least one staging table are related to the set of defined options of the uniform interface, and

wherein the at least one staging table comprises an account staging table that is capable of storing data related to accounts for an entity, a balance staging

table that is capable of storing data related to requested balance information and a column-filter staging table capable of storing data related to filtered accounts, and

wherein the accessed data obtained from the general ledger database, stored in the at least one staging table, and returned to the report object comprises data from the account staging table, the balance staging table and the column-filter staging table, and

wherein the uniform interface comprises computer program code stored on the computer storage medium and executable by a processor of the computer system.

2-3. (Cancelled)

4-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended)   The computer system of claim 1 wherein the generalized request includes at least one natural account, and wherein the at least one natural account is translated into at least one account code, which is stored in ~~an~~the account staging table, with the help of the uniform interface.

8. (Previously Presented)   The computer system of claim 7 wherein the specific query, into which the generalized request is translated by the uniform interface, comprises a single sequential query language (SQL) statement that joins the account staging table with a balance table of the general ledger database, such that balance information for an entire report column is retrieved by execution of the single SQL statement.

9. (Original)   The computer system of claim 8 wherein the balance information comprises current balance amounts for each account code in the account staging table.

10. (Original) The computer system of claim 8 wherein the balance information comprises year-to-date balance amounts for each account code in the account staging table.

11. (Original) The computer system of claim 8 wherein the generalized request further comprises account filter criteria, and wherein a WHERE clause of the single SQL statement is configured to include the account filter criteria.

12. (Currently Amended)   The computer system of claim 1 wherein the generalized request includes at least one natural account and account filter criteria, and wherein, with the help of the uniform interface, the at least one natural account is translated into at least one account code, which is stored in ~~an~~the account staging table, and wherein account codes that match the account filter criteria are stored in ~~a~~the column-filter staging table.

13. (Previously Presented)   The computer system of claim 12 wherein the specific query, into which the generalized request is translated by the uniform interface, comprises a single sequential query language (SQL) statement that joins the account staging table with the column-filter staging table and with a balance table of the general ledger database, such that balance information for an entire report is retrieved by execution of the single SQL statement.

14. (Original) The computer system of claim 13 wherein the balance information comprises current balance amounts for each account code in the account staging table.

15. (Original) The computer system of claim 13 wherein the balance information comprises year-to-date balance amounts for each account code in the account staging table.

16. (Original) The computer system of claim 1 wherein the at least one staging table is a temporary table.

17. (Original) The computer system of claim 1 wherein the at least one staging table is a permanent table.

18. (Currently Amended)   A computer implemented method of retrieving data, from a general ledger database, to satisfy a generalized request from a report object, comprising:

        receiving, in a uniform interface that is independent of any user interface and hashaving a set of defined options that are independent of any user interface options, the generalized request from the report object;

        accessing, based upon information included in the generalized request, data from the general ledger database; and

        utilizing at least one staging table, having a standardized structure which is independent of business rules of the general ledger database, to store at least a portion of the accessed data on a computer storage medium before the at least the portion of the accessed data is returned to the report object from the staging table in response to the generalized request,

        wherein the report object is configured to operate without directly accessing the general ledger database, and

        wherein columns in the at least one staging table are related to the set of defined options of the uniform interface, and

        wherein the uniform interface comprises computer program code stored on the computer storage medium and executable by a processor of the computer system.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Currently Amended)   The method of claim 18 wherein the at least one staging table is a temporary table.

21-23. (Canceled)

24. (New)   The method of claim 18 wherein the at least one staging table comprises three staging tables including an account staging table that is capable of storing data related to accounts for an entity, a balance staging table that is capable of storing data related to requested balance information and a column-filter staging table capable of storing data related to filtered accounts.